

Provisional Identification and Placement Procedures for English Learners During School Closures Grades K-12

Updated August 2020

This procedure provides a means of provisionally identifying English learners (ELs) during the period of remote instruction where virtual continuity of education services are being provided and face-to-face screening is not possible. This process may not replace the formal identification process when face-to-face screening is possible.

- **STEP 1 Home Language Survey (HLS):** Administer a [state approved HLS](#) to all newly enrolling students.

During extended school closures the HLS can be completed remotely by district-trained enrollment personnel (via phone, Zoom, Skype, etc.), if accessible by both families and the district. Parent/guardians may also complete and mail enrollment paperwork. Districts should document the method of collection.

The purpose of the HLS is to find out whether a language other than English is spoken at home, in which case the student may qualify for additional supports to ensure that language is not a barrier to the student's access of academic content. The HLS also presents an opportunity to collect useful information about new students to help district personnel understand a student's personal, academic and linguistic history in order to make the best placement decisions for each individual student.

If the HLS indicates a language other than English for **any** question, **proceed to [STEP 2: Records Review](#)**.

NOTE: Pidgin and Creole variations of English (e.g. English spoken in Liberia) constitute a language other than English for identification purposes.

- **STEP 2 Records Review:** Conduct a review of the student's HLS and academic record from previous school. Districts must conduct a virtual assessment interview with any student whose HLS indicates a language other than English is spoken in the home, or students who may come from an environment where a language

other than English is either dominant in the home or may affect a student's English-language proficiency, with the following exceptions:

- If a student has a WIDA score report, (i.e., ACCESS score report or NH approved WIDA screener score) from the last calendar year, indicating an overall composite proficiency level of 4.4 or lower, the student does not need to be re-screened. **Go to [STEP 6: Parent Notification](#).**
- If a student has a previous ACCESS score report, from the last calendar year, indicating an overall composite proficiency level of 4.5 or higher, then the student should be entered into the NH ESOL database on monitor status. **Go to [STEP 7: Internal Communication](#).**
- If a student's academic records include evidence that a WIDA screener was administered and the student did not qualify for services, then students do not need to be reassessed. The ESOL certified teacher responsible for the file review should document the evidence and decision in the student's cumulative file.

If the HLS survey indicates that a language other than English is spoken in the home, and evidence of EL status is not present in the academic records, then **proceed to [STEP 3: Family Interview](#).**

- STEP 3 Family Interview:** Conduct family interview (see [Appendix A](#)) to determine if the student is potentially an EL. Language assistance must be provided for parents with limited English proficiency.

NOTE: If the student has an IEP or is suspected of having a disability (e.g. the parent states that the student has a disability), then please review guidance in [Appendix B](#) before proceeding.

- STEP 4 Administer WIDA Remote Screener:** The WIDA Remote Screener must be administered by a NH ESOL certified educator and WIDA-certified Test Administrator (TA) with previous experience administering ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Screener.

The EL educator responsible for administering the Remote Screener must log-on to the WIDA Secure Portal to review, print and download the test materials in advance of the testing session.

WIDA recommends that the student is provided with printed color copies of the test materials to reference during the screening call. It is recommended that these test materials be hand-delivered or mailed to the student's home in a sealed envelope. Please include a note on the front of the envelope (in a language the parent/guardian can understand) directing the parent/guardian to keep the envelope sealed until the date and time of the test session.

NOTE: If a contactless option is needed, TAs may screen share student test materials using a video meeting platform; however, this is only recommended when the student has access to a device with an adequate screen size that allows the student to view the entire picture prompt without scrolling or zooming.

Schedule a 30-minute call with the student. If the student is in grades K-5, make sure the scheduled call is at a time when a responsible adult can be present to assist with the session. As needed, schedule an interpreter to join the call to ensure effective communication with the family. To safeguard the validity of the assessment in this non-standard setting, TAs should take time to talk with the responsible adult before the session begins to review expectations.

Planning for a 30-minute call will allow the TA ample time to complete the entire screening process, including time spent greeting and prepping the responsible adult, and time for test administration and scoring.

More guidance for TAs is available in the WIDA Remote Screener TA Manual within the WIDA Secure Portal.

Technology Requirements:

Minimum Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Telephone (landline)•No video•Paper materials delivered to student
Recommended Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Smart Phone•Video Call•Paper materials delivered to student
Optional Approved Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Desktop, laptop or tablet•Video Call•Screen share testing materials

It is recommended that remote screening is administered through a video meeting platform (e.g., FaceTime, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, etc.) whenever possible.

NOTE: If a student is unable to complete the interview process (e.g., due to a disability or refusal); or if a student completes the test session in any circumstance that is less than ideal or compromises the validity of the assessment in any way; then, the determination of EL status must be made based on the remaining available evidence gathered from the HLS, family interview, and academic records review. The student should be provisionally identified as an EL if the screener is incomplete and reasonable evidence of English proficiency cannot be established. **The formal identification process must be completed once school resumes and face-to-face screening is possible.**

- **STEP 5 Provisional Determination:** Make a provisional determination about appropriate academic placement and supports based on the student's English language proficiency and the district's chosen method of language instruction educational programming.

Upon school re-opening, formal screening (using any state approved WIDA screener) must be completed for any student who obtained a proficiency level range of WIDA level 2 (newcomer/beginner) or above with the Remote Screener. Students who obtain a language proficiency range below WIDA level 2, are not required to be re-screened when school reopens. When schools reopen, ESOL teachers may choose to administer the formal screener to students who scored 2.0 or below if there are concerns that the initial assessment was compromised in any way (e.g., testing conditions, technology challenges, student anxiety, parent interference, etc.).

Schools should add all students who are provisionally identified to the NH DOE ESOL roster within the i4see student data system. Under the "student status" field, choose > "Eligible—Provisionally Identified."

NOTE: If the student has an IEP, then ESOL and Special Education personnel **MUST** collaborate to determine program and academic placement and supports.

- **STEP 6 Parent Notification:** Districts must provide the parent with a description of the provisional placement, including the English language supports that will be made available. Language assistance must be provided for parents with limited English

proficiency (i.e., through translation or interpretation). A sample parent letter is available in [Appendix C](#).

- **STEP 7 Internal Communication:** Notify building administration and the receiving teachers of student's identification and placement. The school is responsible for ensuring that all teachers with whom ELs are scheduled have English language proficiency information. This includes general education teachers.

Upon school re-opening, formal screening must be completed for all students who obtained a provisional score of 2.0 or above on the WIDA Remote Screener regardless of whether or not they were identified. The district **MUST ensure that students who are given a provisional status assignment (identified as EL or non-EL) be tracked by the school district; so that once school resumes, they can be screened according to the full procedure.**

Appendix A Family Interview

Interview to be conducted by district-trained enrollment personnel. It should not to be completed independently by the parent/guardian.

Interview conducted by:

Date:

Phone:

Name of Student:

SASID:

Students Date of Birth:

Age:

First Date of Enrollment in US school:

Parent Country of Origin:

Student Country of Origin:

Parents' Primary Country of Education:

Complete the following table for the student. Indicate if the student moved schools, states, or countries during a school year.

Grade	State (City & School if NH)	Country	Primary Language of Instruction
Pre-K	Click or tap here to enter text.		
K			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

1. Is this student a Native Alaskan, Native American, or Native Hawaiian?

YES

NO

2. Is this student's language influenced by a Tribal language through a parent, grandparent, relative, or guardian?
 YES NO
3. At home, how often does this student hear a language other than English?
 Always Occasionally Never
4. At home, how often does this student speak a language other than English?
 Always Occasionally Never
5. When interacting with their parents or guardians, how often does this student hear a language other than English?
 Always Occasionally Never
6. Within the last 12 months, when interacting with caregivers other than parents/guardians, how often did this student hear a language other than English (including any language/cultural school participation)?
 Always Occasionally Never
7. When interacting with siblings or other children in their home, how often does this student hear or use a language other than English?
 Always Occasionally Never

Review of the family interview must be conducted by an ESOL teacher.

Based on the answers to the parent interview questions, determine if the second language exposure/use is significant or superficial in nature. If the student's English language development may have been impacted by exposure to another language in any way, then proceed to [STEP 4: Virtual Assessment Interview](#) to conduct provisional assessment.

Comments:

Appendix B

Considerations for Students with Suspected Disabilities

If a student enrolls with an IEP or is suspected of having a disability (e.g., parent informs enrollment personnel that the student has a disability), then enrollment personnel must coordinate with Special Education staff to complete this procedure.

If the student arrives with an IEP:

This procedure must be completed with appropriate accommodations and the results must be interpreted in consultation with Special Education personnel.

If the student is suspected of having a disability but a determination cannot be made prior to completing this procedure:

This procedure must be completed with any administrative considerations or accommodations that the ESOL/SPED educators deem necessary. This procedure must be completed in accordance with the outlined guidelines and the student must be placed in the appropriate academic program based on the information available at the conclusion of the procedure.

If, after the student is placed in the academic program, the student is determined to have a disability that may have affected the identification procedure (e.g. requires an accommodation that was not offered), then the student must be re-screened in accordance with this procedure using the appropriate accommodations. If the student does not meet the criteria for provisional identification as an EL based on this subsequent testing, then the district must contact the state to remove the EL identifier.

APPENDIX C

Sample Parent Communication Letter on Provisional EL Identification and Placement

Name of District

School Year 2020-2021

Re: Parental Notification Regarding English Language Education Provisional Identification and Placement

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Following Governor Sununu's announcement on April 16, 2020 that New Hampshire schools would not re-open for normal operations, the New Hampshire Department of Education drafted guidance for school districts on the provisional identification and placement procedures of English learners (ELs), to ensure that students enrolling in school districts during the period of extended school closures, who may also qualify for specialized English language services, receive the support they need to meaningfully access academic content as required by state and federal laws. This guidance has been updated with additional tools for use in school districts where school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic will extend into the 2020-21 academic year.

At the time of enrollment, the district requested that you complete a home language survey. Based on the information you provided, the district conducted an interview and administered a remote screener with your child via _____ (method of interview) to determine whether your child is eligible to be provisionally identified as an EL; and, if so, the most appropriate supports and services that will be provided by the district to ensure that your child's educational needs are met during remote learning.

This letter notifies you that based on available information, your child has been determined to be provisionally eligible for placement in an English language education program. The procedure provides a means of provisionally identifying students during the time that schools are closed for normal operations and face-to-face screening is not possible. This process does not replace the formal identification process when face-to-face screening is possible. Formal screening will take place as soon as possible once school resumes normal operations. This letter also describes your child's proposed program placement and services that will be provided during remote learning:

Description of the Proposed Program Placement and Available Services Including ESL during Remote Learning (will be completed by the district):

If your child is or has been found eligible for special education services or qualifies for special education services later, the teachers will work together to make sure the English program and services meet the objectives of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Please contact the special education team in the district for additional information.

You have the right to decline provisional placement of your child in an English language education program or to withdraw your child from the program at any time. Federal and state laws, however, require that the district provide your child with support so that he or she can understand instruction provided in English and develop his or her English skills. It is important to understand that if you decline provisional placement of your child in or withdraw your child from the English language program, your child will not receive specialized English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction focused on language skills during remote learning.

When school reopens for in-person instruction your child will be screened using the standard screening tools and a final determination about his or her eligibility will be made based on those screening test results. You will be notified of your child's eligibility status again at that time.

For more information about the topics discussed in this notice, please contact: _____ [name of district or school contact person] at _____ [phone number] or _____ [e-mail address]. You may also obtain additional information about EL programs offered by the district at a [website]._____

Name of Instructor/Coordinator, Title
Telephone Contact/Email Contact